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The Music of Non-Western Nations and the Evolution of British Ethnomusicology

According to Philip Bohlman, 'national music reflects the image of the nation so that those living in the nation recognize themselves in basic but crucial ways. It is music conceived in the image of the nation that is created through efforts to represent something quintessential about the nation.'¹ Like all nations, Britain conceived of music in its own image, whether indigenous or foreign, and whilst the British Empire expanded from the seventeenth century onwards, so too did the characterization of its own, and the world's, national music. Until the middle of the nineteenth century this characterization was premised on an early anthropological model called developmentalism, but from that time evolutionary models increasingly challenged its hegemonic position.

This chapter explores the relationship between anthropological theory and the representation of non-Western music from the heyday of the British empire to its decline after the First World War. It sets the scene by tracing the often fraught history of anthropology from developmentalism to evolutionism, highlighting important developmental paradigms, such as monogenism, polygenism and the comparative method, and slightly later evolutionary models of Herbert Spencer and Charles Darwin. It then situates these developmental and evolutionary templates with contemporary representations of world musics, providing *in fine* a suggested explanation for their adoption and abandonment.

Anthropology from developmentalism to evolutionism

Developmentalism is an immutable and universal law of cultural and human progression – a teleological paradigm which Peter Bowler classifies as a precursor to evolutionism.² One of developmentalism's major exponents, the Enlightenment thinker Adam Ferguson, 'looked for pattern, law, or direction operating behind the particular events of history'³ through a

three-stage approach, from savagery and barbarism to civilization. Using a theory known as the comparative method, Ferguson and many of his contemporaries exploited the tautological nature of developmentalism to prove that not all living peoples had advanced to an equal developmental stage. Thus modern ‘savages’ remained fixed as living fossils akin to primitive man whereas modern – often European – civilized man had evolved from savagery more fully. George Stocking talks of the developmentalism, and its application in the comparative method, as *de rigueur*, citing exponents such as Rousseau, Goguet, de Brosses, Lord Kames, Ferguson, Boulanger, de Pauw, Reynal, Millar, Demeunier, Adam Smith, William Robertson, and Condorcet.⁴

Another Enlightenment thinker, William Godwin, speaks for the multitude when he claims that whilst savage races can become more civilized, and civilized races can retain traces of primitive stages of development, all men should be ‘brought into union with the great whole of humanity, and be made capable of taking part in its further progress . . . It is the vocation of our [human] race to unite itself into one single body, all parts of which shall be thoroughly known to each others, and all possessed of a similar culture.’⁵ Whilst concepts of inalienable human similarity lay at the root of much late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European and British anthropology,⁶ they failed to account for manifest difference between peoples, both ancient and modern. To that end theories of human origins evolved alongside developmentalism to help explain diversity. The ‘Great Chain of Being’ linked man and apes, and eventually apes and blacks,⁷ and seminal theories of monogenesis (human origins in Adam and Eve) and polygenesis (diverse human origins) emerged.

Cultural and physical disparity became important signifiers of difference, and in Britain, as elsewhere across Europe, anthropologies of difference and similarity coalesced into early forms of scientific racism.⁸

Monogenesis was especially susceptible to racism, as it tried to account for the presence of people omitted from Biblical descent, i.e., non-Christians, heathens, savages and the like. 'Degeneration' arose to explain just such peoples. As Stocking says, 'degeneration, conceived in physical and cultural terms, provided an alternative explanation for the manifest human diversity that increasingly forced itself on anthropological thoughts, just as aggressive ethnocentrism and Christian humanitarianism coexisted in the general cultural attitude toward non-Western peoples.'⁹ Where degenerationism seemed to resolve nagging questions of diversity, its racial emphasis often fuelled prejudice. The British anthropologist James Cowles Prichard (1786--1848), for example, believed that 'all mankind had originally been black and that differentiation was a result of civilization.'¹⁰ In this regard polygenism offered no better solution, being used at times to advocate slavery and an invidious belief in natural human difference. Polygenism, in this respect, simply reinforced already prevalent concepts of racial difference, arguing that 'only differential descent from a different ancestor can account for the bodily differences that come to be called racial difference.'¹¹ Graham Richards calls this 'the subhumanity question',¹² namely the largely polygenist attitudes which denigrate non-whites, and in particular blacks.

The practical application of these developmental models is abundant in British culture well into the 1850s, with perhaps no better example than The Great Exhibition at Crystal Palace. Stocking describes it in the following terms: 'Much of the Crystal Palace encouraged speculation of a more specific sort; the overall system of classification, which forced jurors to compare the same functional objection in a variety of national forms; the character of the different national exhibits, which led one along a line of progress from the Tasmanian savage through the "barbaric" civilizations of the East, northwest across the European continent toward an apex in Great Britain...'¹³ That this rigid conception of human development was underpinned by racism is unquestionable. Robert Knox, for instance,

writes in *The Races of Men* (1850) that 'Race is everything: literature, science, art -- in a word, civilization depends upon it.'¹⁴

At the same time, however, advances in theories of heredity began to force a reconsideration of earlier developmental models. Francis Galton, Charles Darwin's younger cousin, and widely known today as the father of eugenics,¹⁵ travelled widely in the 1840s and 1850s, developing a theory of racial heredity based on physical attributes, linguistics, behaviour and belief. As Stocking points out, despite its lack of conceptual cohesion, Galton's travels were sufficiently influential to be included as a reference in the Crystal Palace guidebook, and were then cited subsequently in R. G. Latham's *Descriptive Ethnology* (1859).¹⁶ Whilst Galton was busy developing racial science into eugenics, Alfred William Wallace, co-discoverer of the evolutionary principle, was travelling in the Amazon collecting material which would ultimately be published in *A Narrative of Travels on the Amazon and Rio Negro* (1853). Wallace's account (which contains limited reference to music) provides a putatively less racist approach, diminishing its significance in favour of questions of adaptation and descent.

For all their significance in the history of anthropology neither Galton nor Wallace would derail developmentalism in the way that their contemporary, Charles Darwin, would. Darwin, who 'put together an argument for the evolution of species that was unprecedented in detail, accuracy, and scope',¹⁷ simply undermined all previous systems of thought. In one fell swoop he denied progress and stripped out from anthropology any teleological purpose or goal. As Steven Jay Gould says, 'Darwin's mechanism can only generate local adaptation to environments that change in a directionless way through time, thus imparting no goal or progressive vector to life's history.'¹⁸ Darwin's impact, to use Oldroyd's term,¹⁹ situated evolution at the vanguard of anthropological thinking, and located it at the intersection of

science, ideology, and world view.²⁰ Thus was born the 'Darwinian paradigm',²¹ or conversely the 'non-Darwinian revolution'.²²

Darwin's exponent, Thomas Huxley, viewed Darwin's theory of evolution as 'reconciling and combining all that is good in the Monogenistic and Polygenistic schools'.²³ In fact Darwin's view of evolution is bound up with natural selection and sexual selection. Natural selection is a process favouring the survival of organisms best suited to their environmental circumstances. All organisms produce more offspring than can possibly survive, and all organisms within a species vary. Some of the variants are better adapted to their environment; and since offspring will inherit their parent favourable variations, the next generation will become better adapted to their environment. There is only a struggle for survival, no predetermined and universal laws of human progress, progression from savage and barbarian to civilization.

Amongst early exponents of evolutionism is the vastly prolific and hugely contentious philosopher Herbert Spencer, who sought to unify all knowledge through evolutionism. It was Spencer, not Darwin, who coined the term 'survival of the fittest',²⁴ and Spencer who translated evolutionism into sociological, ethical and cultural principles. Writing in the 1890s Benjamin Kidd claims that Spencer's *A System of Synthetic Philosophy* (1860--77) is 'a stupendous attempt not only at the unification of knowledge, but at the explanation in terms of evolutionary science of the development which human society is undergoing'.²⁵ More recently Nesbit describes him as 'the supreme embodiment in the late nineteenth century of both liberal individualism and the idea of progress. No one before or since so effectively united the two philosophies of freedom and of progress, or so completely anchored the former in the latter'.²⁶

Anthropologists were, expectedly, heavily divided on Spencer. While propounding an evolutionary mechanism for human development, he also clung antithetically to

unreconstructed notions of race.²⁷ Hannaford puts this down to his belief in the fixity of inheritance, and hence the immutable nature of human instinct,²⁸ whilst others to his belief in man's inability to influence the immutable laws of nature which act upon this.²⁹ According to Hinsley, Spencer's universe 'was in constant change, leading at any one time in one of two directions: towards integration of matter (evolution) or disintegration of matter (dissolution). Evolution involved not only the integration of matter but, equally important, increasing heterogeneity and differentiation of parts and functions.'³⁰

Like Spencer, advocates of evolution often held mutually contradictory views of human progress. Whilst in 1865 the savage of Lubbock's *Prehistoric Times* struggles to progress beyond the most rudimentary form of life, by 1870, with the publication of *Origin of Civilisation*, he had developed previously unknown potential for human evolution. Lubbock's change is characteristic of an intellectual landscape gradually ceding to a Darwinian model of evolution, typified by the eminent anthropologist E. B. Tylor (1832--1917). Tylor's two major works, *Researches into the Early History of Mankind and the Development of Civilization* (1865) and *Primitive Culture* (1871) 'are among those usually taken to mark the apogee of English, Darwinian and positivist influence in cultural anthropology.'³¹ Here the titles themselves illustrate the extent to which certain terminology had begun to be superseded -- the term 'culture' for 'civilization', and 'primitive' for 'early'.³² Tylor explains some of the differences at the outset of *Primitive Culture*:

Culture or Civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. The condition of culture among the various societies of mankind, in so far as it is capable of being investigated on general principles, is a subject apt for the study of laws of human

thought and action. On the one hand, the uniformity which so largely pervades civilization may be ascribed, in great measure, to the uniform action of uniform causes: while on the other hand its various grades may be regarded as stages of development or evolution, each the outcome of previous history, and about to do its proper part in shaping the history of the future.³³

According to De Waal Malefijt, the key word in the first sentence of this quotation is 'acquired', because it indicates 'that culture was the product of social learning rather than of biological heredity, and that the differences in cultural development were not the result of degeneration, but of progress in cultural knowledge.'³⁴ Like Spencer, however, Tylor's brand of evolution remains conflicted over developmentalism. As he says, 'it may be admitted that some rude tribes lead a life to be envied by some barbarous races, and even by the outcasts of higher nations. But that any known savage tribe would not be improved by judicious civilization, is a proposition which no moralist would dare to make; while the general tenour [sic] of the evidence goes far to justify the view that on the whole the civilized man is not only wise and more capable than the savage, but also better and happier, and that the barbarian stands between.'³⁵ Nevertheless, from 1871 the Tylorian concept of culture remained hegemonic for the next thirty years,³⁶ establishing a methodology which would not change substantively in England until well into the 1930s.

EVOLUTIONARY MODELS AND REPRESENTATIONS OF WORLD MUSICS

Monogenism, Polygenism and the Comparative Method

Although it was Tylorian anthropology which would set the scene for modern British ethnomusicology, the history of ethnomusicology in Britain begins much further back in time, in the eighteenth century, often in travel literature translated from another language,

such as Amédée Frézier's *A Voyage to the South-Sea, and along the Coasts of Chili and Peru* (1717), Jean-Baptiste Du Halde's *A Description of the Empire of China and Chinese-Tartary* (1738--41) or J. F. G. De La Pérouse's *A Voyage Round the World in the Years 1785, 1786, 1787, and 1788* (1799). These, and many like them, continued to provide 'raw' music-anthropological material well into the early part of the twentieth century. Another not dissimilar work is George Forster's travels with Captain James Cook (1772 to 1775), *A Voyage Round the World, in His Britannic Majesty's Sloop, Resolution* (1777). Forster's account, while open-minded, nevertheless encapsulates the contradictions lying at the heart of Enlightenment developmentalism. While admiring the emotional depth of Tahitian music, he nonetheless describes it as being 'exceedingly simple', and its words as having 'extreme simplicity' – common ciphers for savage underdevelopment, alongside childishness, animality, naturalness, ignorance, innocence, helplessness and imitateness.³⁷

Forster, like Rousseau, also suggests that traces of these characteristics remain in civilized man, when he suggests that one unappreciative native 'never once expressed a desire of going with us; and when we proposed it to him, he declined it, preferring the wretched precarious life of his countrymen, to all the advantages of which he saw us possessed . . . this way of thinking is common to all savages; and I might have added, that it is not entirely obliterated among polished nations.'³⁸ This trace of savagery often serves a musical purpose, explaining to developmentalists the origin of commensurately limited musical intervals. G. H. Von Langsdorff's study of the music of the cannibals of Washington's Islands provides detailed descriptions of the physical characteristics of instruments, as well as some analytical appreciation: 'It is very remarkable . . . that almost all the songs of uncultivated people, and even the music of European nations not very far advanced in civilization, is composed chiefly of semitones.'³⁹ From a musical standpoint, Von Langsdorff is a monogenist, claiming in the semitone of the islanders a single, original, savage interval.

Other travellers echo this, but place their native hosts at more advanced, yet stunted, degenerated, levels of development. T. Edward Bowdich's claims that minor third, which is a common characteristic of Ashantee music, 'is the most natural interval; the addition of fifths, at the same time, is rare . . . The singing is almost all recitative . . . The songs of the Canoe men are peculiar to themselves, and very much resemble the chants used in cathedrals'.⁴⁰

Where Von Langsdorff and Bowdich imbue intervallic content with anthropological meaning, this suggests a largely monogenist attitude, but some contemporaries refute single musical origins. For the polygenist, John Crawfurd, music of the Indian archipelago is too innately diverse to arise from one source: 'Each tribe has its distinct national airs, but it is among the Javanese alone that music assumes the semblance of an art. These people have, indeed, carried it to a state of improvement, not only beyond their own progress in other arts, but much beyond, I think, that of all other people in so rude a state of society.'⁴¹ In his explanation of musical instruments, Crawfurd also seeks the help of fellow polygenist and renowned composer William Crotch, who on his behalf examined Sir Stamford Raffles's collection of Javanese instruments held at the house of the Duke of Somerset. Crotch's response captures the essence of the polygenist predicament, claiming, inexplicably, common origin yet differential descent:

'The instruments . . . are all in the same kind of scale as that produced by the black keys of the piano-forte; in which scale so many of the Scots and Irish, all the Chinese, and some of the East Indian and North American airs of the greatest antiquity were composed. The result of my examination is a pretty strong conviction that all the real native music of Java, notwithstanding some difficulties which it is unnecessary to particularize, is composed in a common enharmonic scale.'⁴²

Crotch's description of Javanese music highlights another facet of developmentalism, namely the comparative method, which treats modern primitive peoples as living fossils. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given his centrality to the ancient and modern debate, Crotch used modern primitive peoples (foreign and British) to explain historical antiquity. As Stocking says, the "'battle of the ancients and the moderns" opened a new phase of speculation' on the notion of human progress.⁴³

The comparative method continued to find advocates for some time afterward, often in the context of degenerationism, as in James Davies's in-depth musical appendix to Sir George Grey's *Polynesian Mythology* (1855), entitled 'On the Native Songs of New Zealand, and a comparison of the intervals discernible in them with the intervals stated to have been performed by the ancient Greeks in some of their divisions of the musical scale, called γένος ἐναρμονικόν [enharmonic genus], or by others ἁρμονία [harmony].⁴⁴ As Davies says 'My point is, to prove that the ancients did possess and practise a modulation which contained much less [sic] intervals than ours, and that such, or an approach to such, modulation (though probably but imperfect) is still retained among some people, and that the principles on which the Greeks founded their enharmonic genus, still survive in natural song...'⁴⁵ Edward Lane's *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (1836) is another, albeit earlier, example of classic degenerationism, using instruments not simply for what Jann Pasler calls historically 'neutral forms of analysis',⁴⁶ but as encoded signs of social degeneration.

Instruments in Lane's book for public performing (rather than for dancing) of the typical Egyptian band, from the praiseworthy *kemengeh* down to the lowly *rabáb*, are effectively a male preserve, as are wind instruments and some drums. Instruments for women, however, are for private indulgence, rather than performance (for the harem).

Instruments for men are also voiced and even pitched, but what few instruments there are for women are unvoiced and unpitched. Not only do instruments for women fail to 'speak', they are also, in construction, much *simpler* than male instruments. Male instruments are also performed in more complex social contexts (weddings, religious processions, and so on), whereas women's instruments are used within the prescriptive and, as it were, socially simplified context of the harem, where women were commonly essentialized as either erotic or indolent, to offer them 'diversion',⁴⁷ to use Lane's term. Well after Lane instruments continued to signal degeneration amongst anthropologists embracing the comparative method. A. Lane Fox (Pitt Rivers) places musical instruments within the category of 'miscellaneous arts of modern savages' in the anthropological collection at the Bethnal Green Museum, claiming that 'The resemblance between the arts of modern savages and those of primeval man may be compared to that existing between recent and extinct species of animals . . . amongst the arts of existing people in all stages of civilisation, we are able to trace a succession of ideas from the simple to the complex, but not the true order of development by which those more complex arrangements have been brought about.'⁴⁸

Transition to evolution

Theories of developmentalism were not uniformly accepted amongst scholars. Arguably the first to upset the developmentalist applecart was William Jones, renowned scholar of Indian languages, literature and philosophy, supreme court judge in Bengal from 1783 and founder of The Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784. In one of the earliest treatises of its kind, 'On the Musical Modes of the Hindoos' (1792), Jones equalizes development across peoples, claiming that all music, be it Hindu or Western music, should be judged in its own terms: 'the *Hindoo* poets never fail to change the *metre*, which is their *mode*, according to the change of subject or sentiment in the same piece; and I could produce instances of *poetical modulation*

(if such a phrase may be used) at least equal to the most affecting modulations of our greatest composers: now the musician must naturally have emulated the poet, as every translator endeavours to resemble his original.’⁴⁹

Although Jones’s views did not inform consensus, they, and others like them, did break the early confidence of Enlightenment developmentalism, and with it the security of anthropological models promulgated by the increasingly professional world of learned societies, such as the Royal Society of Edinburgh (1783), the Linnaean Society of London (1788), The Royal Institution of Great Britain (1799), the Geological Society of London (1807), The Royal Asiatic Society (1823) and the Royal Geographical Society (1830). From the 1840s anthropological societies emerged as independent entities, beginning with The Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland and the Ethnological Society of London (both 1843), and later the Anthropological Society of London (1865). A good example of conflicted developmentalism is the erstwhile Prichardian and comparative methodologist William Daune, fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland and compiler of *Ancient Scottish Melodies* (1838) and other works on national music. Daune’s certainty is qualified: although the modern European system of music ‘may possibly be the best which can be adopted . . . this can only be known for certain by an extensive comparison with other systems.’⁵⁰ Like Prichard, whose work is described as ‘the investigation of the history of nations and of mankind from many other quarters’,⁵¹ Daune also claims that

national music . . . is amongst the oldest and the most lasting of their [a people’s] relics. Carried down from father to son, like an heir-loom in a family . . . It bears a *pretium affectionis*, and is prized more because it is our own, and associated with ties of kindred and home, than from any intrinsic excellence in the music itself. It is

probably, therefore, that it was *original destination*, rather than *choice*, which assigned to this and other countries their particular style of national music...⁵²

In some ways Dauneys methodology would not be out of place in modern ethnomusicology, insofar as 'the minds of the persons employed [to transcribe music in the field] be divested of all such preconceived notions, and that they be instructed to take down the music with the strictest fidelity'.⁵³ In fact, these desiderata would soon reappear. Not long after Dauneys had formulated his own brand of comparative method, *The Musical Times* published a set of lectures by T. H. Tomlinson on non-Western music. These typify what Stocking calls 'the crisis in Prichardian ethnology',⁵⁴ resulting from a shift in 'the historical argument for human unity'⁵⁵ to a biological paradigm seeking in history recurrent patterns and variations. Where Prichard struggled to disaggregate antiquity and modernity Tomlinson had no such difficulty. In 'On the Antiquity of Indian Music' he summarizes this view:

It may perhaps be said that in endeavouring to trace the state of the art of music up to a remote period, in such a country as India, it is wandering uselessly in a field of conjecture, without any clue to guide us to a competent knowledge, where so little assistance is derived from history, and where, in fact, oral tradition, mixed up with a great portion of fabulous matter, seems the only existing and most fallacious mode of tracing it . . .⁵⁶

With the decline of the Prichardian comparative method anthropology came temporarily adrift, something evinced in musical representations of the time. John Hullah opines that 'the history of modern music is altogether European. Not that the Orientals have, or have had, no music of their own; but that, as at present practised, their music has no charm, nor

indeed meaning, for us. How is this? How can there be music acceptable to one comparatively civilized people and altogether unacceptable -- unintelligible even -- to another?⁵⁷

This incomprehension led to numerous efforts to reinstate the hegemonic position of developmentalism, and even to a certain retrenching. Amongst the most prominent figure to do this was John Frederick Rowbotham, author of *A History of Music* (1885). Rowbotham divides national music into two interacting parts, the first a type of intellectual and emotional dualism, and the other a Comtean tripartition of distinct fixed stages corresponding to the drum, pipe and lyre. From the 1860s, however, developmentalism largely gave way to evolutionism, first in its Spencerian incarnation, and later in its equally powerful formulation of Darwin. The transition between the two is at times fraught with arcane ideological tensions which continued to percolate through anthropological and early ethnomusicological literature well into the 1930s.

If ethnomusicology could be said to have existed before the term was first used, then there is good reason to associate this term with one of its principal historical figures, Carl Engel. Unlike his contemporary, the unreconstructed developmentalist and frequently cantankerous music critic Henry Chorley, Engel seeks an altogether more empirical methodology, though at times clinging to vestiges of the comparative method. Engel is mostly widely known today for some key works in the history of British ethnomusicology, including his *Descriptive Catalogue of the Musical Instruments in the South Kensington Museum* (1874), *The Music of the Most Ancient Nations* (1864), *An Introduction to the Study of National Music* (1866) and the later compilation of *Musical Times* articles, *The Literature of National Music* (1879). Few, however, will be aware of his important role in establishing ethnomusicology at the heart of British anthropology, in his contribution on music to the first *Notes and Queries on Anthropology* (1874), the first systematized approach to field

methodology to be produced in Britain. Engel begins his work on national music with a thoroughly unrepentant comparative method, but unlike his contemporaries who used the present to reconstruct the past, he uses the past to investigate the present, in a reversal of classic comparative method:

For years I have taken every opportunity of ascertaining the distinctive characteristics of the music not only of civilized but also of uncivilized nations. I soon saw that the latter is capable of yielding important suggestions for the science and history of music, just as the languages of savage nations are useful in philological and ethnological inquiries.

As I proceeded, I became more and more convinced that, in order to understand clearly the music of the various modern nations, it was necessary to extend my researches to the music of ancient nations.⁵⁸

This reversal of comparative method set Engel on a largely untrodden path, questioning the presumption of universality which previously attended anthropological investigations into national music:

Although the feelings of the human heart, which music expresses, are, in the main, the same in every nation; yet they are, in individual instances, considerably modified by different influences . . . the tunes are in some cases so totally different from those of our own country, that they are, on first acquaintance, almost as incomprehensible as poems in a language but slightly known to us. Indeed, the common adage that music is a universal language, is but half true. There are, at all

events, many dialects in this language which require to be studied before they can be understood.⁵⁹

Engel's reluctance to accept conventional wisdom about musical universality is more than an appreciation of difference, but a sign of diminishing anthropological certainty. In the face of advancing scientific empiricism, itself vitalized by Darwin's evolutionary revolution, Engel not only abandoned much of the methodological apparatus of grassroots developmentalism, but drew towards the first generation of classic evolutionists, most notably E. B. Tylor.

Despite his hegemonic position in British anthropology, Tylor was not a card-carrying Darwinian, and like Engel retained in his methodology some arguably anachronistic elements of developmentalism. Writing in his landmark *Primitive Music* (1871) he opines 'that any known savage tribe would not be improved by judicious civilization, is a proposition which no moralist would dare to make; while the general tenour [sic] of the evidence goes far to justify the view that on the whole the civilized man is not only wise and more capable than the savage, but also better and happier, and that the barbarian stands between.'⁶⁰ Nevertheless, Tylor went some way towards ditching his developmentalist baggage, and like Engel arrived at a functional, if not theoretically satisfactory, compromise. New terminologies were created, especially antithetical to developmentalist vocabularies. As previously discussed, 'civilization' was the first to go, as the opening of *Primitive Culture* makes clear.

In *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*, published as an ideological statement of the newly formed Anthropological Institute, Engel simply translates and applies this to the study of national music, becoming the earliest figure in the history of British ethnomusicology to set out a methodological statement within a purely anthropological context. For Engel, as the Institute, history 'has confined itself chiefly to the achievements of special races; but the

anthropologist regards all races as equally worthy of a place in the records of human development'.⁶¹ Engel turns this into a proclamation of musical equality:

The music of every nation has certain characteristics of its own. The progression of intervals, the modulations, embellishments, rhythmical effects, &c. occurring in the music of extra-European nations are not unfrequently too peculiar to be accurately indicated by means of our musical notation. Some additional explanation is therefore required with the notation. In writing down the popular tunes of foreign countries on hearing them sung or played by the natives, no attempt should be made to rectify any thing which may appear incorrect to the European ear. The more faithfully the apparent defects are preserved, the more valuable is the notation. Collections of popular tunes (with the words of the airs) are very desirable. Likewise drawings of musical instruments, with explanations respecting the constructions, dimensions, capabilities, and employment of the instruments represented.⁶²

Spencerian and Darwinian Evolutionism

Engel and Tylor's dismantling of developmentalism would speak to anthropologists with an interest in reassessing and redefining the universality of national music, in particular that early generation of evolutionists influenced by Darwin, such as the psychologist Edmund Gurney, author of the magisterial *Power of Sound* (1880), the musicologist Richard Wallaschek, author of *Primitive Music* (1893) and the critic Ernst Newman, author of numerous articles, including 'Herbert Spencer and the Origin of Music' (1910). Yet under the influence of Darwin's contemporary, Herbert Spencer, developmentalism continued to crowd musicological debate, particularly in the circle of the composer and historian C.

Hubert H Parry, author of *The Evolution of the Art of Music* (1893 and 1896) and *Style in Musical Art* (1924). Inevitably, although Spencer and Darwin were both evolutionists, they often found themselves at odds, and this same opposition filtered down into two relatively distinct representations of national music.

Spencer's influence in music begins with his hugely controversial article 'The Origin and Function of Music' (1857) and continues into the early twentieth century with numerous related, and equally contentious, articles. In these and his non-musical writings, Spencer was girded by the theoretical vocabulary of German morphology: from Ernst von Baer comes the idea that man evolves from the general to the specialized (from homogeneity to heterogeneity), and from Ernst Haeckel, the ineluctable superiority and perfectability of man.⁶³ These strands coalesce in Spencer's grand narrative of musical evolution in which impassioned speech gives rise to music; thus speech is to music as savagery is to civilization: 'That music is a product of civilization is manifest: for though some of the lowest savages have their dance-chants, these are of a kind scarcely to be signified by the title musical: at most they supply but the vaguest rudiment of music properly so called.'⁶⁴ Parry read Spencer with relish, falling sway to his synthesis of morphological terminology and unreconstructed developmentalism. This is clear from the opening pages of 'folk-song' in *The Art of Music* (1893):

The basis of all music and the very first steps in the long story of musical development are to be found in the musical utterances of the most undeveloped and unconscious types of humanity, such as unadulterated savages and inhabitants of lonely isolated districts well removed from any of the influences of education and culture. Such savages are in the same position in relation to music as the remote ancestors of the race before the story of the artistic development of music began;

and through study of the ways in which they contrive their primitive fragments of tune and rhythm, and of the way they string these together, the first steps of musical development may be traced.⁶⁵

Spencer left musicology divided. Acolytes of developmentalism persisted in increasingly unsupportable anthropological views, yet Darwinians struggled to substantiate evolutionary theory. Newman, for example, draws upon Wallaschek to prove that because music and speech are governed by different parts of the brain, music cannot have evolved from speech:

To us, there is a great psychological and aesthetic gulf fixed between excited speech and song -- *not only between the speech and the song of to-day, but between the ruder speech and ruder song of primitive man* . . . Allowing for all the differences between our music and that of the savage who blows his reed and thumps his tam-tam, and for all the differences of general mental structure between him and us, we can still see that the same causes which incite us to music incited him.⁶⁶

This is reiterated by Gurney, who in 'The Speech Theory' deplores Spencer's idea that 'the speech of primitive man had a special relation to Music; [and] that his direct and normal expression of his intuitions and feelings contained the essential germs of Music, or was actually "a sort of music."' ⁶⁷ Gurney also suggests that 'we cannot judge music with the savage ear till we can remake ourselves into savages', ⁶⁸ and with this reflects a growing tendency to reformulate understandings of universalism in music. This reformulation would near fruition in the writing of Richard Wallaschek, who perhaps disappointingly for later

observers of his work, diverts historical methodologies into the realm of race: 'the difference between people with and without harmonic music is not *a historical but a racial one*.'⁶⁹

Early Darwinists remained encumbered by developmentalism until the advent of the psychologist Charles Samuel Myers, the first Britain to record non-Western music in the field, and arguably Britain's first ethnomusicologist. Despite his significance, Myers's career remains obscure within the annals of ethnomusicology,⁷⁰ and has only recently attracted the attention of historians of psychology. Nonetheless, his significance can not be underestimated, because it was Myers who effectively vanquished British ethnomusicology's long history of developmentalism. Even then, Myers fought this process tooth and nail, and it was not until the eleventh hour, when his formative research was finally published that he relinquished, perhaps begrudgingly, the Spencerian paradigm.

In 1895, soon after leaving his medical studies in Cambridge, Myers accompanied the distinguished Cambridge anthropologist A. C. Haddon and others on an expedition to the Torres Straits (New Guinea) and Sarawak (Borneo). The expedition, known as the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Straits, was conceived 'as a multidisciplinary project encompassing anthropology in its broadest sense, including ethnology, physical anthropology, psychology, linguistics, sociology, ethnomusicology and anthropogeography'⁷¹ within which Myers would be responsible for music. The expedition spent roughly seven months in Torres Straits (between Northern Australia and Papua New Guinea) from April to October 1898 and though generally concentrating its fieldwork on Mer, allowed for considerable movement to other islands in the Straits. The research that emerged from the expedition comprises a set of six volumes published from 1901 to 1935, to which Myers contributed work mainly for Volume 2, *Physiology and Psychology* (1901 and 1903), comprising research on the senses, including work on hearing and reaction times, and Volume 4, *Arts and Crafts* (1912), which included his work music and musical instruments.

In these and later works Myers signals a life-long commitment to understanding the “whole” through an understanding of the “individual,” and as such locates himself within the progressive psychology of individual differences (or differential psychology), which explains how and why people are psychologically different from one another.⁷² In ‘The Absurdity of any Mind-Body Relation’ (1932), for example, he proposes that life consists of both the ‘lives of its several parts [neurologically] and of the ‘life’ of the unitary ‘individual,’ which is more than the sum of the life of its several parts.⁷³ Armed with differential psychology, Myers, and other psychologists, developed a theory which accepts difference as a function of the individual within the cultural environment. It was ‘cultural adaptationism’ which he then used to debunk the last vestige of developmentalism, the ‘Spencerian hypothesis’, which promulgates the view that “primitives” surpassed “civilized” people in psychophysical performance because they retained more energy for rudimentary functions. Developmentalism was finally shot down in flames – not before time, as it was only in 1935, well after the Torres Straits expedition was over, that the long-awaited introductory volume of the Reports would be published.

Myers substantiates his views with copious musical references, all leading to what he calls the apprehension of ‘musical meaning’. These are set out as a universal, yet culturally individuated, evolutionary phenomenon in ‘The Beginnings of Music’ (1913), a summary of findings from the Torres Straits. They include (1) discrimination between noises and tones; (2) awareness of differences in loudness, pitch, duration, character and quality; (3) awareness of absolute pitch; (4) appreciation and use of (small) approximately equal tone-distances; (5) appreciation and use of (larger) consonant intervals and the development of small intervals in relation thereto; (6) melodic phrasing; (7) rhythmic phrasing; and (8) musical meaning.⁷⁴ With the achievement of musical meaning, in whatsoever culture one lives, all men attain parity: ‘We have first to disregard our well-trained feelings towards

consonances and dissonances. We have next to banish to the margins of our field of consciousness certain aspects of music, which, were it our own music, would occupy the very focus of attention. Thus incomprehensibility will gradually give place to meaning, and dislike to some interesting emotion.⁷⁵

CONCLUSION

Indeed, as Myers suggests, it is incomprehensibility, as much anthropological as musical, which precluded and stymied that kind of meaning which would give rise to greater appreciation of foreign music. But why until his time did incomprehensibility (i.e., developmentalism) reign supreme? The answer is, arguably, simple: developmentalism is the anthropology of empire. It is the anthropology of power, of moral and ethical superiority, of conquest, progress, triumph and teleology; whereas evolutionism is the anthropology of political loss, of post-imperial contraction, of chance and unwilled environmental development.

David Cannadine notes that 'as with all such transoceanic realms, the British Empire was not only a geopolitical entity: it was also a culturally created and imaginatively constructed artifact',⁷⁶ and it was developmentalism which nurtured that artifact. Edward Said argues the point more broadly: 'So vast and yet so detailed is imperialism as an experience with crucial cultural dimensions, that we must speak of overlapping territories, inter-twined histories common to men and women, whites and non-whites, dwellers in the metropolis and on the peripheries, past as well as present and future...'⁷⁷ John MacKenzie echoes these points, showing how art, music, theatre, dance and literature (both popular and academic) 'both reflected and sometimes actively shaped the instruments'⁷⁸ of empire, whilst Jeffrey Richards expresses much the same opinion: 'In view of the ubiquity of imperialism in fiction, painting, poetry and theatre, it would seem intrinsically likely that it

has left its traces in music.’⁷⁹ As Ralph Locke’s penetrating analysis of Said’s interpretation of *Aida* shows, the relationship of empire, music and culture operates within ‘multiple agendas’ which must go beyond more limited readings of iconic compositions in the study of imperialism, exoticism or Orientalism in Western music.⁸⁰ Amongst these multiple agendas is the anthropological lens of developmentalism and evolutionism, both key factors in the construction of national identity, whether imperial or not.

Peter Marshall argues that ‘Empire enforced a hierarchical view of the world, in which the British occupied a pre-eminent place among the colonial powers, while those subject to colonial rule were ranged below them, in varying degrees of supposed inferiority.’⁸¹ and this is reiterated by George Stocking, who portrays certain Victorian developmentalists as unquestioningly ‘confident of their own cultural and racial superiority.’⁸² Either way, whether the colonized were inferior, or the colonizers superior, it says the same thing: developmentalism fed their mindset and constructed their world, while evolutionism rationalized their loss and tore down their confidence. As things went for the Britain, with the decline of the empire after the First World War, it was the Darwinian model which won out in the end. Ironically, as an anthropological model Darwinism, rather than Spencerianism, was the fittest survivor.

Gillian Beer writes that ‘The idea of development harboured a paternalistic assumption once it was transferred to human beings, since it was presumed that the observer was at the summit of development, looking back over a past struggling to reach the present high moment. The European was taken as the type of achieved developmental pre-eminence, and other races studied were seen as further back on the chart of growth.’⁸³ As we know, however, once the children began to leave home they forged identities of their own and eschewed paternal control, not matter how supposedly benign. Awareness of this same biased outlook might well inform Philip Bohlman’s readings of national music, when he

refers to Engel, and Vaughan Williams, as expressing an evolutionary 'view from the top'.⁸⁴ From a musical standpoint, it is this view which Myers overturned with what might be called 'view from the bottom' – a view not from a developmental apogee, but a constantly changing evolutionary beginning. Indeed, it is this representation which reflected the post-imperial British nation. To use Bohlman's words, 'It is music conceived in the image of the nation'.⁸⁵

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3 John J. Honigmann, *The Development of Anthropological Ideas*, Homewood, IL et al.: The Dorsey Press, 1976, 86.

4 George W. Stocking, Jr, *Victorian Anthropology*, New York: Free Press, 1987, 15.

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- 6 Roxann Wheeler, *The Complexion of Race: Categories of Difference in Eighteenth-Century British Culture*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000, 10.
- 7 Gustav Jahoda, *Images of Savages: Ancient Roots of Modern Prejudice in Western Culture*, London and New York: Routledge, 1999, 25.
- 8 Christine Bolt, *Victorian Attitudes To Race*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul; and Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971, 9.
- 9 Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology*, 44.
- 10 Hanna Franziska Augstein, *Race: The Origins of an Idea, 1760--1850*, Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1996, xxiv.
- 11 Norris Saakwa-Mante, 'Western Medicine and Racial Constitutions: Surgeon John Atkins' Theory of Polygenism and Sleepy Distemper in the 1730s', in Waltraud Ernst and Bernard Harris (eds), *Race, Science and Medicine, 1700--1960*, London and New York: Routledge, 1999, 30.

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15 Francis Galton, *Inquiries into Human Faculty and its Development*, London: J. M. Dent 1883/1973, 17.

16 *Ibid.*, 94.

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18 Stephen Jay Gould, 'Introduction', in Carl Zimmer, *Evolution: The Triumph of an Idea*, London: William Heinemann, 2002, xi--xiii.

19 See D. R. Oldroyd, *Darwinian Impacts: An Introduction to the Darwinian Revolution*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1980, *passim*.

20 See John C. Greene, *Science, Ideology, and World View: Essay in the History of Evolutionary Ideas*, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1981.

21 See Michael Ruse, *The Darwinian Paradigm: Essays on its History, Philosophy, and Religious Implications*, London and New York: Routledge, 1989.

22 See Peter J. Bowler, *The Non-Darwinian Revolution: Reinterpreting a Historical Myth*, Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988.

23 Thomas Huxley, 'On the Methods and Results of Ethnology', *Fortnightly Review* 1 (1865), cited in James Hunt, 'On the Application of the Principle of Natural Selection in Anthropology', *Anthropological Review* 4 (1866), 321.

24 The origin of Spencer's phrase 'survival of the fittest' is widely disputed. As Crook (1994, 216) points out, some consider the phrase as having originated in Spencer's 'Theory of Population' (1852). Rogers (1972, 266) reiterates this view. According to Diane B. Paul and John Offer it is now accepted that it was first used in 1864 in Part 3, Chapter 12, Volume 1 of Spencer's *Principles of Biology* (see Paul (1988, 412–14) and Offer (2000, 3).

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26 Robert Nesbit, *History of the Idea of Progress*, London: Heinemann, 1980, 229.

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32 *Ibid.*, 13.

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35 Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, 31.

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37 Gustav Jahoda, *Images of Savages: Ancient Roots of modern Prejudice in Western Culture*, London and New York: Routledge, 1999, 9--10.

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